

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL **VILLAGES** OF FRANCE

Practical info • History and tours • Festivals and activities
Gourmet and artisanal specialties

Flammarion

The Most Beautiful Villages of France

Inside story

The association of Les Plus Beaux Villages de France® was founded in the early summer of 1981 when one man encountered a certain book. That man was Charles Ceyrac, mayor of the village of Collonges-la-Rouge in Corrèze, and the book was *Les Plus Beaux Villages de France*, published by Sélection du Reader's Digest. This book gave Ceyrac the idea of harnessing people's energy and passion to protect and promote the exceptional heritage of France's most beautiful villages. Sixty-six mayors signed up to Charles Ceyrac's initiative, which was made official on March 6, 1982 at Salers in Cantal, France.

Today, this national network of almost 160 villages works to protect and enhance the heritage of these exceptional locations in order to increase their renown and promote their economic development.

Three steps to becoming one of The Most Beautiful Villages of France

Three preliminary criteria

In the first instance, the village looking to join the association must submit an application showing that it meets the following criteria:

- a total population (whether village or hamlet) of no more than 2,000 inhabitants
- at least two protected sites or monuments (historic landmarks, etc.)
- proof of mass support for the application for membership via public debate

Twenty-seven evaluation criteria

If these three conditions are met, the application is accepted. The village then receives a site visit. After an interview with the local council and a photographic report have been completed, a table of twenty-seven criteria is used to evaluate the village's heritage, architectural, urban, and environmental attributes, as well as its own municipal initiatives to promote the village.

The verdict of the Quality Commission

The finished evaluation report is put before the Quality Commission, which alone has the power to make decisions on whether a village should be accepted (an outcome requiring a two-thirds majority in the vote). About ten candidates apply each year, and about 20% of applications are successful. The approved villages are also subject to regular re-evaluation in order to guarantee each visitor an outstanding experience.

A concept that has traveled the globe

Interest in preserving and enhancing rural heritage transcends national boundaries, and several initiatives throughout Europe and the rest of the world have given rise to other associations on the French model: Les Plus Beaux Villages de Wallonie (Belgium) in 1994; Les Plus Beaux Villages du Québec (Canada) in 1998; I Borghi Più Belli d'Italia in 2001; The Most Beautiful Villages of Japan in 2005; and Los Pueblos Mas Bonitos de España in 2011. Collaborating with the Federation of the Most Beautiful Villages of the World, these associations are now taking their particular expertise to emerging networks.

Join us on www.facebook.com/LPBVT

To read more about the association, visit www.lesplusbeauxvillagesdefrance.org



BECOME A FRIEND OF THE ASSOCIATION

Join us and play your part in protecting the heritage of French villages by becoming a **Friend of The Most Beautiful Villages of France**. In return for your membership fee you will receive special privileges, gifts, and discounts to help you get the most out of your stay. Participating establishments are marked with a ♥ in this guide.

Membership details are available at the back of this book.





M. Ruffet*: +33 (0)2 56 26 91 05 or +33 (0)6 33 38 37 18.
 Moncontour Cité Médiévale :
 +33 (0)2 96 61 46 85.
 Mme Picard: +33 (0)2 96 61 46 85 or +33 (0)6 61 94 38 45.
Campsites
 La Tourelle*: +33 (0)2 96 73 50 65 or +33 (0)6 76 74 85 04.

Eating Out

Adana Kebab: +33 (0)2 96 76 02 72.
 Au Coin du Feu, crêperie/pizzeria:
 +33 (0)2 96 73 49 10.
 Le Chaudron Magique: +33 (0)2 96 73 40 34.
 La Mulette: +33 (0)2 96 73 50 37.
 La Poterne: +33 (0)2 96 73 40 01.
 Les Remparts: +33 (0)2 96 73 54 83.

Local Specialties

Art and Crafts
 Ceramic artist • Dressmaker and hatter •
 Beadmaker • Stylist • Costume designer •
 Painter • Stained-glass artist • Résidence
 des Arts (exhibitions and residencies by
 artists and craftspeople).



Events

Market: Local produce, Monday evenings.
Pentecost: Pardon de Saint-Mathurin
 procession, Pentecost festivities.
July–August: Sporting and cultural
 activities (daily).

August (odd years): Fête Médiévale,
 medieval festival (1st Sunday).
September: "Journée des Peintres"
 painting contest; Festival Dell Arte,
 street art (1st weekend).
December: Ménestrail, cross-country trail.

Outdoor Activities

Walking, horse-riding, and mountain-
 biking • Nordic walking • Fishing.

Further Afield

- Plémy (3 miles/5 km).
- Hénon, Quessoy, and Trébry: parks
 and residences of Ancien Régime
 notables (3½–5 miles/5.5–8 km).
- Saint-Glen: Village des Automates,
 clockwork and robotic toys (July and
 August) (6 miles/9.5 km).
- Lamballe (10 miles/16 km).
- Saint-Brieuc (16 miles/26 km).
- Loudéac (17 miles/27 km).
- Quintin: castle and Musée Atelier
 du Tisserand et des Toiles, working
 weaving museum (18 miles/29 km).
- Le Foeil (20 miles/32 km).



Montrésor

**In the heart of the Loire valley,
 on the banks of the Indrois**

Indre-et-Loire (37) • Population: 350 • Altitude: 328 ft. (100 m)

Montrésor get its name from the Treasurer (*Trésorier*) of the chapter
 house at Tours Cathedral, which owned this area in the 10th century.
 In the early 11th century, the powerful count of Anjou, Foulques III,
 nicknamed "Foulque Nerra" (Fulk III, the Black), began to build a
 fortress at Montrésor in order to defend the approaches to the
 Touraine. Remains of the double ring of defenses are still visible.
 Inside its wall, at the end of the 15th century, Imbert de Bastarnay
 (advisor to the French kings Louis XI, Charles VIII, Louis XII, and
 François I) built the present castle in the Renaissance style. He is also
 responsible for the collegiate church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, which
 houses an Annunciation painted by Philippe de Champaigne (1602–
 1674), as well as tombs of members of his family. In 1849, the castle
 became the property of Xavier Branicki, a Polish count and friend of
 Napoléon III. He restored it and filled it with many works of art: sculp-
 tures by Pierre Vanneau, and Italian Renaissance and Dutch paint-
 ings. Count Branicki also gave his name to one of the streets cut into
 the rock, where half-troglodytic and half-timbered houses rub shoul-
 ders. Cardeux Market, once the wool market, has been restored as a
 cultural center and exhibition space, and recalls village life in bygone
 days. The 16th-century Chancellor's Lodge, which has a watchtower,
 houses the present town hall. The riverside walk, "Balcons de
 l'Indrois," provides wonderful views of the village from the footbridge
 to Jardinier Bridge, which was built by Eiffel's workshop.



By road: Expressway A85, exit 11–Bléré
 (17 miles/27 km); N76 (17 miles/27 km).
By train: Tours station (34 miles/55
 km); Saint-Pierre-des-Corps TGV station
 (34 miles/55 km). **By air:** Tours-Saint-
 Symphorien airport (42 miles/68 km).

Tourist information:
 +33 (0)2 47 92 70 71
www.loches-valde Loire.com

👁️ **Highlights**

- **Castle** (11th–15th centuries): “Musée d’Art Polonais”: +33 (0)2 47 92 60 04.
- **Collegiate church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste** (16th century): Alabaster tomb with three recumbent statues, Annunciation by Philippe de Champaigne, stained-glass windows, 16th-century stalls and paintings, reliquary with the skullcap of Pope John Paul II.
- **Cardeux wool market** (18th century): Permanent exhibition of *gemmail* stained glass and the history of Montrésor.
- **Banks of the Indrois**: Walking paths and information points along the river.
- **Village**: Guided tours for groups only and by appointment: +33 (0)2 47 92 70 71.

🔑 **Accommodation**
Guesthouses

Le Moulin de Montrésor***:
+33 (0)2 47 92 68 20.
La Grenache: +33 (0)2 47 92 71 39.
Gîtes and vacation rentals
Maisons de Charme: +33 (0)6 86 44 63 72.
Further information: +33 (0)2 47 27 70 71.

🍴 **Eating Out**

Café de la Ville: +33 (0)2 47 92 75 31.
Crêperie Barapom: +33 (0)2 47 19 27 48.
La Légende: +33 (0)2 47 92 61 90.

🍷 **Local Specialties**

Food and Drink
Montrésor macarons • Montrésor rillettes.
Art and Crafts
Local crafts (Maison de Pays shop) • Painter.

📅 **Events**

July–August: “Nuits Solaires” evening festival, illuminated trail accompanied by music and events on the banks of the Indrois; painters’ and sculptors’ fair (August 15).
December: Christmas market.

🏞️ **Outdoor Activities**

Boules playing field • Fishing • Walking: 2 marked trails • Cycling • Horse-riding trails.

🌿 **Further Afield**

- Lac de Chemillé, lake (1½ miles/2 km).
- Chartreuse du Liget (2½ miles/4 km).
- Loches, Indre valley (11 miles/18 km).
- Beauval Zoo (12½ miles/20 km).
- Chedigny (12½ miles/20 km).
- Château de Montpoupon; Cher valley: Chenonceaux; Loire valley: Amboise (18½–28 miles/30–45 km).
- Château de Valençay (19 miles/31 km).



🧐 **Did you know?**

According to legend, the young Gontran, who became king of Burgundy from 561 to 592, fell asleep in his equerry’s lap on a riverbank and dreamed of treasure hidden in a cave. The equerry saw a small lizard run over Gontran’s face; it dashed toward a nearby hill and returned covered in gold. When the king was told this vision, he

quickly had the hill excavated and discovered enormous wealth there. But the chronicles of the Middle Ages reveal that this estate belonged to the Treasurer of Tour Cathedral’s chapter house. This explains why during the 10th century it was called Mons Thesauri (mount of the Treasurer), which later became Montrésor.

Montsoreau

The lady’s castle

Maine-et-Loire (49) • Population: 447 • Altitude: 108 ft. (33 m)

Montsoreau sits between Anjou and the Touraine, in a land of history, sweetness, and harmony.

Lying between the Loire and a hill, and very close to the royal abbey of Fontevraud, Montsoreau grew up around its 15th-century castle. The village draws a rich heritage from the Loire river and Montsoreau’s lady, Françoise de Maridor; Alexandre Dumas wrote tales about her passionate and fatal love affair with Bussy d’Amboise. There is something for everyone here: wander the village’s flower-lined paths that climb toward the vineyards, and admire its white tufa-stone residences and immaculately tended gardens. Stroll the courtyards and alleyways, beyond which the Loire stretches into the distance; roam the Saut aux Loups hillside, where historic cave dwellings nestle. Taste some famous Saumur-Champigny and Crémant de Loire wines at a local vineyard.



By road: Expressway A85, exit 5–Bourgueil (7½ miles/11.5 km). **By train**: Saumur station (8 miles/13 km). **By air**: Angers-Marcé airport (39 miles/63 km); Tours-Saint-Symphorien airport (45 miles/72 km); Nantes-Atlantique airport (110 miles/177 km).

📞 **Tourist information**:
+33 (0)2 41 51 70 22
www.ot-saumur.fr
www.ville-montsoreau.fr



Eguisheim

Enter the round

Haut-Rhin (68) • Population: 1,802 • Altitude: 689 ft. (210 m)

Just a short distance from Colmar, Eguisheim—the birthplace of wine-growing in Alsace—winds in concentric circles around its castle.

Whether around the castle at the center of the village, which witnessed the birth of the future Pope Leo IX (1002–1054), or along the ramparts that encircle it, Eguisheim encourages visitors to go round in circles. With every step, from courtyard to fountain, lane to square, the ever-present curve changes one’s perspective of the colorful houses arrayed with flowers, half-timbering, and oriel windows. Rebuilt in the Gothic style, the Église Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul is distinguished by its high square tower of yellow sandstone, and a magnificent tympanum depicting Christ in Majesty flanked by two saints, as well as the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.

The winegrowers’ and coopers’ houses, with their large courtyards, are a reminder that—as well as being a feast for the eyes—Eguisheim also delights the palate with its *grand cru* wines, which are celebrated with festivals throughout the year.

Highlights

- **Chapel of the Château Saint-Léon** (19th century, neo-Romanesque style): Relics of Pope Leo IX.
- **Église Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul** (11th–14th centuries): Polychromed wooden statue known as “the Opening Virgin” (13th century), porch of the old church.
- **Parc des Cigognes** (stork garden): Free entry to the enclosure, information board on the life of Alsace’s legendary bird.
- **Vineyards**: Guided tour of the wine route followed by a guided tasting session

of the wines of Alsace. By arrangement with the winegrowers, and on Saturdays from mid-June to mid-September and on Saturdays and Tuesdays in August: +33 (0)3 89 23 40 33.

• **Village**: Guided tours all year for groups and by arrangement, and Thursdays from mid-June to mid-September: +33 (0)3 89 23 40 23; guided tour on a tourist train and tour of the area on the Train Gourmand du Vignoble Tuesdays and Thursdays: +33 (0)3 89 73 74 24, discovery tour of the old village (information boards with QR codes).



By road: Expressway A35, exit 27–Sainte-Croix-en-Plaine (4½ miles/7 km). **By train**: Colmar station (4½ miles/7 km). **By air**: Bâle-Mulhouse station (35 miles/56 km); Strasbourg-Inter airport (45 miles/72 km).

Tourist information:
+33 (0)3 89 23 40 33
www.ot-eguisheim.fr

Accommodation

Hotels
Auberge Alsacienne***:
+33 (0)3 89 41 50 20.
Ferme du Pape***: +33 (0)3 89 41 41 21.
♥ Hostellerie du Château***:
+33 (0)3 89 23 72 00.
Hôtel Saint-Hubert***:
+33 (0)3 89 41 40 50.
À la Ville de Nancy**: +33 (0)3 89 41 78 75.
Auberge des Trois Châteaux**:
+33 (0)3 89 23 70 61.
Hostellerie des Comtes***:
+33 (0)3 89 41 16 99.
Auberge du Rempart: +33 (0)3 89 41 16 87.

Aparthotel
Résidence*** Pierre et Vacances:
+33 (0)3 89 30 41 20.

Guesthouses
M. et Mme Bombenger
+33 (0)3 89 23 71 19.
Other guesthouses, gîtes, and vacation rentals
Further information: 03 89 23 40 33
www.ot-eguisheim.fr

Campsites
Les Trois Châteaux***:
+33 (0)3 89 23 19 39.

Eating Out

À la Ville de Nancy: +33 (0)3 89 41 78 75.
Auberge Alsacienne: +33 (0)3 89 41 50 20.
Auberge du Rempart: +33 (0)3 89 41 16 87.



Auberge des Trois Châteaux:
+33 (0)3 89 23 70 61.
Au Vieux Porche: +33 (0)3 89 24 01 90.
Caveau des Douceurs: +33 (0)3 89 23 10 01.
Caveau Heuhaus: +33 (0)3 89 41 85 72.
Le Dagsbourg: +33 (0)3 89 41 51 90.
Ferme du Pape: +33 (0)3 89 41 41 21.
La Grangelière: +33 (0)3 89 23 00 30.
Hostellerie des Comtes:
+33 (0)3 89 41 16 99.
Le Pavillon Gourmand:
+33 (0)3 89 24 36 88.
Wistub-Bierstub Kas Fratz:
+33 (0)3 89 41 87 66.



Local Specialties

Food and Drink
Pretzels • Pain d’épice (spice cake) • Mushrooms • Alsatian charcuterie • AOC Alsace wines and Eichberg and Pfersigberg *grands crus*.
Art and Crafts
Artists’ studios • Art gallery • Painting • Upholstery and decoration.

Events

July: Eguisheim wines week and “Nuit des Grands Crus” wine festival (2nd fortnight).
August: Discovery Day, Parc à Cigognes (1st Sunday), guided wine tasting (1st week), Fête des Vignerons, winegrowers’ festival (last weekend).
September: Fête du Vin Nouveau, new wine festival (last weekend).
October: Fête du Vin Nouveau (1st weekend), Fête du Champignon, mushroom festival (last weekend).
November and December: Christmas market (daily for the four weeks of Advent).

Outdoor Activities

Discovery of the village by microlight • Standard and electric bike rental • Walking: 12 marked trails • Segway rides.

Further Afield

- Hautes Vosges, region: Munster valley; Col de la Schlucht (3–19 miles/5–31 km).
- Colmar (3½ miles/5.5 km).
- Alsace wine route: Turckheim (5 miles/8 km); Rouffach (7 miles/11.5 km); Kaysersberg (8 miles/13 km); *Riquewihr (11 miles/18 km), see pp. 74–75; *Hunawihr (12 miles/19 km), see pp. 64–65; Guebwiller (13 miles/21 km).
- Château du Hohlandsbourg and Five Castles route (5 miles/8 km).
- Neuf-Brisach (13 miles/21 km).

Did you know?

Here, if stones could speak, they would tell the story of the illustrious family of the counts of Eguisheim, into which was born a certain Bruno, son of Hugh IV. A high-ranking nobleman, he was called to papal office. Bruno went to Rome on foot, stick in hand, cape on his shoulders, just as he is depicted in his statue on the Place du Château. On his arrival, he was acclaimed by the people of Rome and enthroned as Pope Leo IX.

Hunawihr

The colors of the vines

Haut-Rhin (68) • Population: 603 • Altitude: 525 ft. (160 m)

Situated on the Alsace wine route amid the vineyards, Hunawihr is a typical Alsatian village, bedecked with flowers.

Hunawihr owes its name to a laundrywoman, Saint Huna; according to legend, she lived here in the 7th century with her husband, the Frankish lord, Hunon. The 15th–16th-century church contains 15th-century frescoes that recount the life of Saint Nicholas. Surrounded by a cemetery fortified by six bastions, it is built on the hill overlooking the village, whose attractions include the Saint June Fountain with its washhouse, the town hall (formerly the corn exchange), the Renaissance-style Maison Schickhart, half-timbered houses, and bourgeois residences from the 16th and 19th centuries. Nature-lovers can visit the center for reintroducing storks and otters, and the butterfly garden—both magical places.



By road: Expressway A35, exit 23–Ribeauvillé then N83 (5½ miles/9 km).
By rail: Colmar station (11 miles/18 km).
By air: Bâle-Mulhouse airport (47 miles/76 km).

Tourist information:
 +33 (0)3 89 73 23 23
 www.hunawihr.fr

Highlights

- **Church** (15th and 16th centuries) and its fortified cemetery: Saint Nicholas frescoes (15th century).
- **Centre de Réintroduction des Cigognes et des Loutres:** NaturOparC, 12-acre (5-ha.) wildlife park dedicated to reintroducing and preserving storks, otters, and other local species: +33 (0)3 89 73 72 62.
- **Jardin des Papillons:** Several hundred exotic butterflies from Africa, Asia, and the Americas, living in a lush garden: +33 (0)3 89 73 33 33.
- **Village:** Guided tour of the church and village every Wednesday and Friday in July and August, meet at 6.15 p.m. at the church: +33 (0)3 89 73 23 23; Randoland, recreational discovery trail around the village.
- **Grands crus wine trail:** Permanent discovery trail; guided tour by a winemaker and free tasting sessions in summer. Further information: +33 (0)3 89 73 23 23.

- **Vineyards:** Guided tour followed by a guided tasting session every Thursday at 3.30 p.m. in July and August. Further information: +33 (0)3 89 73 61 67.

Accommodation

Guesthouses

Further information: +33 (0)3 89 73 23 23
 www.ribeauville-riquewihr.com
 www.hunawihr.fr

Gîtes and vacation rentals

Further information: +33 (0)3 89 73 23 23
 www.ribeauville-riquewihr.com
 www.hunawihr.fr



Eating Out

Caveau du Vigneron: +33 (0)3 89 73 70 15.
 O'Goutchi: +33 (0)3 89 58 88 23.
 Wistub Suzel: +33 (0)3 89 73 30 85.

Local Specialties

Food and Drink

Distilled spirits • AOC Alsace wines, Crémant d'Alsace, and *grand cru* Rosacker (Gewürztraminer, Riesling, Pinot Gris).

Events

August: Hunafascht, Alsatian open-air evenings under paper lanterns (1st Friday and Saturday).

Outdoor Activities

Cycle touring • Walking • Mountain-biking, 1 marked trail • Chemin de Compostelle (Saint James's Way) trail.

Further Afield

- Alsace wine route: *Riquewihr (1 mile/1.5 km), see pp. 74–75; Ribeauvillé; Bergheim; Kintzheim; *Eguisheim (12 miles/19 km), see pp. 60–61.
- Haut-Koenigsbourg (8½ miles/13.5 km).
- Colmar; Sélestat (9½ miles/15.5 km).
- *Mittelbergheim (23 miles/37 km), see pp. 69–70.

Did you know?

The village joined the Reformation in 1537, but after Alsace was annexed to France in 1648 Catholicism was reintroduced. "Simultaneum"—whereby Protestants and Catholics share a church but worship at different times—was instigated in 1687 and is ongoing.



Gordes

Jewel of the Luberon

Vaucluse (84) • Population: 2,100 • Altitude: 1,171 ft. (357 m)

Like an eagle's nest perched on the foothills of the Monts de Vaucluse, facing the famous Luberon mountain, Gordes is the archetypal Provençal village.

Surrounded by a mosaic of holm oaks, wheat fields, and vines, the village's dry-stone houses—solidly attached to the rock—seem to tumble down in cascades. Its history, its rich architecture and heritage, its marvelous views, its cobbled winding lanes, and its fountain shaded by a plane tree on the Place du Château have appealed to numerous artists, from André Lhote (1885–1962) and Pol Mara (1920–1998) to Victor Vasarely (1906–1997). A short distance from the village, at the end of a lavender field, which in springtime enhances the pale stone of its façade, the Abbaye de Sénanque is a perfect example of Cistercian architecture and is still inhabited by monks.



By road: Expressway A7, exit 24—Avignon Sud (17 miles/27 km).
By train: Cavaillon station (11 miles/18 km); Avignon TGV station (25 miles/40 km).
By air: Avignon-Caumont airport (19 miles/31 km); Marseille-Provence airport (48 miles/77 km).

📍 Tourist information—Luberon Monts de Vaucluse: +33 (0)4 90 72 02 75
www.luberoncoeurdeprovence.com

👁 Highlights

- **Abbaye de Sénanque** (12th century): The church, dormitory, cloister, and chapter house can be visited on guided tours. Further information: +33 (0)4 90 72 02 75.
- **Cellars of the Palais Saint-Firmin:** Situated beneath a large house, the cellars feature caves, cisterns, and an old seigneurial oil press; documentary, museum, MP3 audioguide. Further information: +33 (0)4 90 72 02 75.
- **Moulin des Bouillons and Musée du Vitrail:** One of the oldest preserved oil mills with all its workings, presses from the 1st to the 14th centuries, collections of oil lamps, amphorae; at the same site, the Musée du Vitrail recounts the history of glass and stained-glass windows via a large collection: +33 (0)4 90 72 22 11.
- **Castle** (16th century): Of medieval origin, rebuilt during the Renaissance. Exhibitions by artists who have lived in Gordes or that relate to the history of the village; also temporary exhibitions: +33 (0)4 90 72 02 75.
- **Village des Bories:** Museum of rural dry-stone dwellings (*bories*) that served as housing until the middle of the 19th century: +33 (0)4 90 72 03 48.
- **Village:** Guided tour by arrangement: +33 (0)4 90 72 02 75.

🏠 Accommodation

- Hotels**
 La Bastide****: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 12.
 Les Bories****: +33 (0)4 90 72 00 51.
 ♥ La Ferme de la Huppe****:
 +33 (0)4 90 72 12 25.



- Auberge de Carcarille***:
 33 (0)4 90 72 02 63.
 ♥ Le Jas de Gordes***: +33 (0)4 90 72 00 75.
 ♥ Le Mas des Romarins***:
 +33 (0)4 90 72 12 13.
 Le Mas de la Sénancole***:
 +33 (0)4 90 76 76 55.
 Le Petit Palais d'Aglaé****:
 +33 (0)4 32 50 21 02.
Guesthouses, gîtes, and vacation rentals
 Further information: +33 (0)4 90 72 02 75
www.luberoncoeurdeprovence.com
Aparthotels
 La Bastide des Chênes: +33 (0)4 90 72 73 74.
Campsites
 Les Sources***: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 48.

🍴 Eating Out

- Restaurants**
 L'Artégat: +33 (0)4 90 72 02 54.
 ♥ Auberge de Carcarille:
 +33 (0)4 90 72 02 63.
 La Bastide: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 12.
 Le Bistro de la Huppe: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 25.
 Les Bories: +33 (0)4 90 72 00 51.
 Casa Rosario: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 98.
 Les Cuisines du Château:
 +33 (0)4 90 72 01 31.
 ♥ L'Esprit des Romarins: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 13.
 L'Estaminet: +33 (0)4 90 72 14 45.
 L'Estellan: +33 (0)4 90 72 04 90.
 La Farigoule: +33 (0)4 90 76 92 76.
 Le Jardin: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 34.
 Le Loup Blanc: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 43.
 Le Mas Tourteron: +33 (0)4 90 72 00 16.
 Le Renaissance: +33 (0)4 90 72 02 02.
 Les Sources: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 48.
 Le Table d'Euphrosyne: +33 (0)4 32 50 21 02.
 Le Teston: +33 (0)4 32 50 21 74.
Light meals
 La Crêperie de Fanny: +33 (0)4 32 50 13 01.
 L'Encas: +33 (0)4 90 72 29 82.
 Le Goût de la Vie: +33 (0)4 90 72 57 44.

🍷 Local Specialties

- Food and Drink**
 Honey • AOC Côtes du Ventoux wine • Olive oil.
Art and Crafts
 Jewelry • Art galleries • Potters • Sculptor.

📅 Events

- Market:** Tuesday mornings, Place du Château.
January: Fête de la Saint-Vincent (2nd fortnight).
April–October: Painting and sculpture exhibitions in the municipal halls.
July and August: Numerous concerts at the Théâtre des Terrasses.
August: "Les Soirées d'Été," festival (1st fortnight); Fête du Vin des Côtes du Ventoux, wine festival (1st Sunday).
December: "Veillée Calendale," Christmas songs and tasting of the thirteen desserts, representative of Jesus and his apostles (1st fortnight); Christmas market.

🚶 Outdoor Activities

- Walking: Route GR 6 and 2 marked trails • Mountain-biking/Electric mountain-bike rentals.

🌿 Further Afield

- Véroncles: water mills (1 mile/1.5 km).
- Murs (5½ miles/9 km).
- Roussillon (5½ miles/9 km), see pp. 126–27.
- Ménerbes (7 miles/11.5 km), see p. 112.
- Fontaine-de-Vaucluse (7½ miles/12 km).
- Venasque (9½ miles/15.5 km), see pp. 147–48.
- Lourmarin (18 miles/29 km), see pp. 109–10.
- Avignon (24 miles/39 km).
- Ansouis (24 miles/39 km), see pp. 86–87.





La Roque-sur-Cèze

Stone, vines, and water

Gard (30) • Population: 178 • Altitude: 295 ft. (90 m)

Surrounded by *garrigue* scrubland, La Roque-sur-Cèze has established itself on a rocky slope overlooking the Cèze river and surrounding vineyards.

Past the Pont Charles-Martel with its twelve arches, along steep, winding, cobbled streets, lies an endless jumble of buildings, rooftops, and covered terraces, whose sun-weathered stone walls and Genoese tiles give them a Tuscan feel. When you reach the top of the village, after a certain amount of physical exertion, the ruins of the 12th-century castle and its Romanesque chapel are reminders of the strategic position that the site enjoyed in the Middle Ages on the Roman road leading from Nîmes to Alba. Presenting a sharp contrast with the serenity and aridity of the village are the dramatic waterfalls, rapids, and crevices of the Cascades du Sautadet, including the magnificent “giants’ cauldrons”—cylindrical cavities, some of them huge, cut into the Cèze; they require great caution but offer a refreshing place to relax in the wilderness.



By road: Expressway A7, exit 19–Bollène (17 miles/28 km); expressway A9, exit 22–Roquemaure (19 miles/31 km); N86 (6 miles/9.5 km). **By train:** Bollène-La Croisière station (15 miles/24 km); Avignon TGV station (29 miles/47 km). **By air:** Avignon-Caumont airport (32 miles/51 km); Nîmes-Alès-Camargue-Cévennes airport (50 miles/80 km).

Tourist information—
Gard Rhodanien: +33 (0)4 66 82 30 02
tourisme.gardrhodanien.media
www.laroquesurceze.fr

Highlights

- **Village:** Guided tour by arrangement: +33 (0)4 66 82 30 02.
- **Church** (10th century): restored in 2013, contemporary stained-glass windows.
- **Chapelle du Presbytères:** exhibitions.

Accommodation

Guesthouses
Mme Welland**: +33 (0)4 66 79 27 76.
M. and Mme Dupart: +33 (0)6 23 09 17 09.
Gîtes and vacation rentals
Further information: +33 (0)4 66 82 30 02
www.tourisme-gard-rhodanien.com
Campsites
Les Cascades****: +33 (0)4 66 82 72 97.
La Vallée Verte****: +33 (0)4 66 79 08 89.

Eating Out

L'Auberge des Cascades:
+33 (0)4 66 50 80 98.
Le Bistrot de la Roque: +33 (0)4 66 82 78 60.
Cèze Grand Rue: +33 (0)4 66 82 08 42.
Chez Piou, open-air café/restaurant (summer only): +33 (0)4 66 82 77 72.
Enfin Voilà l'Été (summer only):
+33 (0)6 68 02 89 26.

Le Mas du Bélier: +33 (0)4 66 82 21 39.
Pizzeria Camping Les Cascades:
+33 (0)4 66 82 08 42.
Wine and Food: +33 (0)4 66 79 08 89.

Local Specialties

Food and Drink
AOC Côtes du Rhône wines.

Events

May: “En mai fais ce qu’il te plait,” month-long festival of food, wine, and nature.
Mid-August: Jam fair.
Throughout the summer: Concerts and entertainment as part of “Les Arts de la Voix” festival.

Outdoor Activities

Walking and mountain-biking •
Swimming • Canoeing • Fishing.

Further Afield

- Chartreuse de Valbonne, monastery (3½ miles/5.5 km).
- Cornillon; Goudargues (5 miles/8 km).
- Pont-Saint-Esprit (6 miles/9.5 km).
- Bagnols-sur-Cèze: market (7½ miles/12 km).
- Gorges of the Cèze (9½ miles/15.5 km).
- Montclus (9½ miles/15.5 km), see p. 115.
- Aiguèze (11 miles/18 km), see pp. 84–85.
- Lussan (12½ miles/20 km), see p. 111.
- Méjannes-le-Clap: Grotte de la Salamandre (14 miles/23 km).
- Barjac: market (15 miles/24 km).
- Gorges of the Ardèche; Aven d’Orgnac, sinkhole; Vallon-Pont-d’Arc (19–25 miles/31–40 km).
- Uzès (19 miles/31 km).
- Orange (22 miles/35 km).
- Pont du Gard, Roman aqueduct (25 miles/40 km).
- Avignon (27 miles/43 km).



Highlights

- **Église Saint-Étienne** (12th, 15th, and 17th centuries): Romanesque style; arched door, rich furnishings.
- **Tours of the bell tower and salt marshes:** April to September.
- **Huître de Ré, oyster farm:** Guided tours April to September, Wednesday evening with tasting and Thursday evening: +33 (0)5 46 29 44 24.

Accommodation
Hotels

- Le Clocher***: +33 (0)5 46 29 41 20.
- Le Martray***: +33 (0)5 46 29 40 04.
- Le Sénéchal***: +33 (0)5 46 29 40 42.
- Le Parasol**: +33 (0)5 46 29 46 17.
- Thalassotherapy resorts**
Côté Thalasso Ile de Ré***:
+33 (0)5 46 29 10 00.
- Vacation rentals and guesthouses**
Further information: +33 (0)5 46 29 46 09
www.iledere-arsenre.com
- Holiday villages**
La Salicorne, VVF: +33 (0)5 46 29 45 13.

Campsites

- Le Cormoran****: +33 (0)5 46 29 68 27.
- Les Dunes****: +33 (0)5 46 29 41 41.
- ESSI***: +33 (0)5 46 29 44 73.
- Le Soleil***: +33 (0)5 46 29 40 62.
- La Combe à l'Eau*: +33 (0)5 46 29 46 42.

Eating Out

- Le 20 [vingt], wine bar, world cuisine:
+33 (0)5 46 29 69 52.
- L'Annexe: +33 (0)5 46 34 06 71.
- Au Gôûter Breton: +33 (0)5 46 29 41 36.
- Aux Frères de la Côte, brasserie:
+33 (0)5 46 29 04 54.
- Le Bistrot du Martray:
+33 (0)5 46 29 40 04.
- La Cabane du Fier: +33 (0)5 46 29 64 84.
- Le Café du Commerce, brasserie/crêperie:
+33 (0)5 46 29 41 57.
- Chez Rémi: +33 (0)5 46 29 40 26.
- Le Clocher: +33 (0)5 46 29 41 20.
- Le Grenier à Sel: +33 (0)5 46 29 08 62.
- Le K'Ré d'Ars: +33 (0)5 46 29 94 94.
- L'Océane: +33 (0)5 46 29 24 70.
- Ô de Mer: +33 (0)5 46 29 23 33.

- Le Parasol: +33 (0)5 46 29 46 17.
- La Pointe de Grignon: +33 (0)5 46 29 10 00.
- Sans Foie ni Loix, beer and tapas bar:
+33 (0)9 50 44 37 97.
- Le Soleil d'Ars: +33 (0)5 46 43 09 27.
- La Tour du Sénéchal, light meals,
seafood: +33 (0)5 46 29 41 12.
- Le "V": +33 (0)5 46 29 45 56.

Local Specialties

- Food and Drink**
Strawberries • Shrimp • Oysters • AOP
early potatoes • Salt and *fleur de sel*
sea salt • Wine and Pineau.
- Art and Crafts**
Antique dealers • Artists.

Events

- Markets:** Daily 8 a.m.–1 p.m., Place du
Marché-d'Été (April–September) or
Tuesdays and Fridays 8 a.m.–1 p.m.,
Place Carnot (Winter).
- July and August:** Concerts, "Embrasement
du Clocher," fireworks display and dance,
regattas.

Outdoor Activities

- Bathing: La Grange beach • Cycling: Cycle
paths across the marshes to the nature
reserve at Fiers d'Ars • Walking: 3 marked
trails • Sailing • Riding • Thalassotherapy.

Further Afield

- Saint-Clément-des-Baleines: Lighthouse
and Parc des Incas (3 miles/5 km).
- Les Portes-en-Ré: Maison du Fier
et de la Nature (6 miles/9.5 km).
- Loix-en-Ré: Écomusée du Marais Salant,
local heritage museum (7½ miles/12 km).
- Saint-Martin-de-Ré: fortifications
(7½ miles/12 km).
- *La Flotte (11 miles/18 km), see
pp. 196–97.
- La Rochelle (21 miles/34 km).

Did you know?

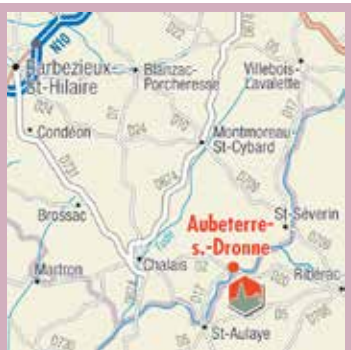
Producing more than 2,000 tons of salt every year, the salt marshes lie behind the development of Ars. The huge *salorge*, where the salt was stored, now houses the covered market, and some fine merchant houses are still visible on the Rue du Havre.

Aubeterre-sur-Dronne

Monolithic grandeur amid the white rocks

Charente (16) • Population: 422 • Altitude: 295 ft. (90 m)

Nestled against a chalky limestone cliff, Aubeterre overlooks the verdant valley of the Dronne river and boasts an extraordinary cultural heritage. Around its central square, a labyrinth of roofs and house fronts bedecked with wooden galleries and balconies stretches out. Facing the castle of this old fortress town, which was destroyed by the English and then by the Huguenots, and whose imposing gate still overlooks the Dronne, stands the Église Saint-Jacques, with its fine Romanesque façade. At the turn of every street and steep alleyway, the visitor is reminded of Aubeterre's religious past: pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela would stop at the church and three former convents, and the village also features the monolithic Église Saint-Jean, which was carved into the rock near a primitive worship site in the 12th century. For an unforgettable experience, explore the underground building and necropolis beneath its high vaults of light and shade.



By road: Expressway A89, exit 11–Coutras (27 miles/43 km). **By train:** Chalais station (7½ miles/12 km). **By air:** Bergerac-Roumanière airport (43 miles/69 km).

Tourist information:
+33 (0)5 45 98 57 18
www.sudcharentetourisme.fr
www.aubeterresurdronne.com



Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges

Ancient guardian of the Pyrenees

Haute-Garonne (31) * Population: 259 * Altitude: 1,700 ft. (518 m)

Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges owes its name to the bishop who built its cathedral. Located at the foot of the Pyrenees, the village still contains the ruins of a Roman forum, established in 72 BCE by Pompey on his return from Spain. Considered to be King Herod's place of exile, the town grew up around a basilica in the 4th century before it was destroyed by the Vandals and then the Burgundians. Bertrand, bishop of Comminges, rebuilt the village from its ruins and installed an episcopal court here. Military in appearance, the Cathédrale Sainte-Marie, which was remodeled in the 14th century by the future pope Clement V, retains its 12th-century bell tower, its cloisters giving onto the Pyrenees, and its portal representing the Adoration of the Magi, the Virgin and Child, and Saint Bertrand. A rood screen stands in front of the choir and its sixty-six carved oak stalls and 16th-century episcopal throne. Fine dwellings from the 16th–18th centuries huddle around the cathedral. Forming a girdle around the old town, the ramparts are punctuated by the Majou, Cabirole, and l'Hyrisson gateways.



By road: Expressway A64, exit 17–Luchon (4 miles/6 km).
By train: Montréjeau station (4½ miles/7 km).
By air: Tarbes, Ossun, Lourdes airport (45 miles/72 km); Toulouse-Blagnac airport (72 miles/116 km).

📍 Tourist information:
 Saint-Gaudinois: +33 (0)5 61 94 77 61
 www.tourisme-stgaudens.com

👁 Highlights

- **Cathédrale Sainte-Marie** (11th–14th centuries): Tympanum showing the Adoration of the Magi, the Virgin and Child, and Saint Bertrand; ensemble of 66 stalls carved from wood; 16th-century corner organ. Self-guided or guided tours, audioguides: +33 (0)5 61 89 04 91.
- **Early Christian basilica:** Remains of a basilica (date unknown, but 4th-century coins were found inside date) whose foundations incorporate 28 sarcophagi in marble from the Pyrenees.
- **Chapelle Saint-Julien:** 19th-century reconstruction of an ancient chapel.
- **Les Olivétains Cultural and Tourist Center:** Archaeological museum, bookstore, contemporary art exhibitions: +33 (0)5 61 95 44 44.
- **Musée du Blason et des Ordres de Chevalerie** (heraldry museum): Renaissance mansion housing a collection of over 2,000 coats of arms, coins, illuminated manuscripts, and medieval weapons; retells legends concerning the orders of chivalry: +33 (0)6 22 35 30 10.
- **Village:** Guided tour for groups, only by prior arrangement: +33 (0)5 61 95 44 44.

🔑 Accommodation

Hotels
 L'Oppidum*: +33 (0)5 61 88 33 50.
 Les Comminges*: +33 (0)5 61 88 31 43.
Guesthouses
 La Randonnée de Saint-Jacques: +33 (0)6 76 15 32 13.
Gîtes, walkers' lodges, and vacation rentals
 Further information: +33 (0)5 61 95 44 44.
Campsite
 Es Pibous*: +33 (0)5 61 94 98 20.

🍴 Eating Out

Restaurants
 Le Bistrot Gourmand – Chez Martine: +33 (0)6 27 29 08 63.
 Chez Simone: +33 (0)5 61 94 91 05.
 La Vieille Auberge: +33 (0)5 61 88 36 60.

🏠 Local Specialties

Food and Drink
 Cassoulet • Foie gras • *Porc noir de Bigorre* (rare-breed pork) • Croustade (flaky fruit pastry) • Tome des Pyrénées cheese
Art and Crafts
 Jewelry, fossils, and minerals • Leatherwork, saddlery • Umbrella-maker • Blacksmith • Clogs.

📅 Events

July: Local fête.
July and August: Gourmet food markets; "Nocturnes de Saint-Bertrand," themed strolls, cathedral meditation (each Thursday except 1st week July).
July–September: "Festival du Comminge," classical music festival.

🦋 Outdoor Activities

Walks: GR 656 and 2 trails.

🌿 Further Afield

- Valcabrière: basilica (1 mile/2 km).
- Barbazan (3 miles/5 km).
- La Barousse valley (4½ miles/7 km).
- Gargas: caves (5 miles/8 km).
- Montréjeau and Saint-Gaudens (5½–11 miles/9–17 km).
- Bagnères-de-Luchon (20 miles/32 km).

